

EXCURSION TO COODE ISLAND.

INTERESTED by the remarks on the flora, &c., of Coode Island in the *Naturalist* for July last (*Vict. Nat.*, xxviii., p. 57), a party of eighteen boarded the motor boat at Queen's Bridge on Saturday afternoon, 23rd March, *en route* to the island. Shortly after arrival there two more members joined the party. All expressed surprise at the large amount of foreign vegetation that was growing there. It was noted that most of the plants found flowering there during previous trips made by the leaders in such periods of former years as October to December, also June, were found in flower, thus evidently showing that the exotic plants had not as yet settled down to our seasons. It was also pointed out that, whilst the foreign shells collected there were mostly of North American origin, the plants were mostly South African, and in a few instances European or Asiatic, but none of North American origin, thus showing that the North American ballast came from the seashore, and that from South Africa apparently from further inland.

About twelve plants which are either recognized as native or naturalized aliens in other parts of the State, but not previously recorded for the island, were collected. Amongst these might be mentioned a variegated form of the Red Goosefoot, *Chenopodium rubrum*, L., and the Caltrops, *Tribulus terrestris*, L. Four species not previously recorded as introduced in Victoria were obtained—i.e.,

Mercurialis annua, L., Annual Dog's Mercury, Euphorbiaceæ ; a native of Europe and North Africa.

Aizoon rigidum, L., var. *angustifolium*, Sond., Rigid Aizoon. Ficoideæ ; indigenous to South Africa.

Hermannia velutina, D.C., Velvet Hermannia, Sterculiaceæ ; another stranger from South Africa.

Abutilon indicum, Sweet., Indian Lantern-flower, Malvaceæ ; a native of the tropical regions, also found in South Africa.

Two other apparently new introductions were found, but these, unfortunately, were without fully developed flowers or fruit, and could not as yet be fully determined. Altogether, fully fifty species were noted in flower, notwithstanding the dry season.

Insects were exceedingly scarce. The only species found were the introduced carab beetles, *Lamostenus complanatus* (which were found under the stones), two species of the longicorn Hebecerus, and several other common beetles ; some larvæ of the salt-marsh mosquito, *Culex labeculosus* were collected ; and a few specimens of the rare scale-insect, *Pulvinaria salicorniæ*, were found on the salicornia bushes. A White-lipped Snake, *Denisonia coronoides*, and several small lizards, *Tympanocryptis lineata*, were also noticed.

Mr. R. W. Armitage has kindly handed us the following

notes on the foreign rocks, brought as ballast, noticed during the afternoon:—"For young students of geology who read about and study rocks, some of which are not to be procured *in situ* anywhere in the neighbourhood of Melbourne, Coode Island forms a splendid collecting ground. Many kinds of metamorphic rocks, including various beautiful gneisses, of which some bear bands of perfectly crystallized red garnets, granite porphyries, granites of various textures, schists, limestones crowded with fossils, varied sandstones and quartzites, are among the specimens to be found in abundance on the south-east portion of the island. These would constitute handsome educational cabinet specimens of types of rocks difficult to procure otherwise except at some expense, but it must be borne in mind that under the circumstances of their occurrence their place of origin cannot be recorded with any degree of certainty."

All the members of the party were well satisfied with their outing, and expressed a wish to again have an opportunity of visiting the island. We would therefore suggest that the committee, when drawing up next year's excursion list, should include a trip to Coode Island, say, at the end of October or early in November. A comparison could then be made by members between autumn and spring conditions.—C. FRENCH, JUN., and J. R. TOVEY.

SOME AUSTRALIAN BOOKS WORTH READING.—"For variety of trees one has to get out to the desert country, where flourish the 'kurrajungs'—too well known to need description—and silky oaks. Nothing could be more exquisite to look upon than a forest of these trees, which grow very closely together, and whose stems are seldom more than eight inches in diameter. As a breeze sweeps over their gleaming foliage, a sea of billowing silver, darkening and glistening as the sunlight plays upon the leaves, appears before the delighted traveller."—From "Collar and Cuffs," by St. C. Grondona, a description of station life in Central Queensland. "It was joyous to see how the Australian bush, the bush of the West, came up out of slumber. Flocks of cockatoos and pink galahs—flying together, making a delightful colour scheme of pink and grey and white and saffron—screamed across the timber, or circled cautiously down to the river to drink. Sometimes a little mob of Black Duck went whizzing up-stream, or a brace of mottled Wood-Duck passed by carefully out of gunshot. Rhipi, the wagtail, and his feathered brother the Peewit, sought the early insect with interchange of civilities. Gay parrots streaked across stream, flashing coloured images in unruffled water. All the bush world became awake, alert, industrious—full of quest and call."—From "River Rovers," by E. J. Brady, an interesting account of a voyage down the Murray by motor boat.